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Joint Development and Fixed Route Bus Systems

Experience in Bridgeport, Connecticut

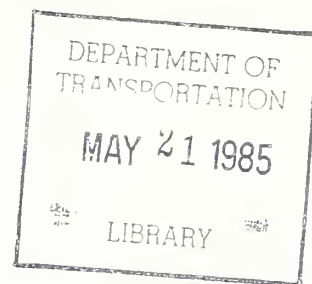
January 1985



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**Joint Development and
Fixed Route Bus Systems;**
Experience in Bridgeport, Connecticut

Final Report
January 1985



Prepared by
Greater Bridgeport Transit District
525 Water Street
Bridgeport, CT 06604

Prepared for
Office of Planning Assistance
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NOTE: This report is a review and analysis of key issues associated with bus transit systems and urban development. Part of its content includes recommendations based on this contractor's perceptions of the issues involved. Recognizing that there may be many alternative approaches to resolving transportation problems, these positions may not necessarily reflect those of the U.S. Government. As such, no endorsement of these recommendations is either expressed or implied by the U.S. Department of Transportation.

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Chapter I

Conclusions and Recommendations

A. The Need for Transit Market Development

Public transit derives its funding both from market-based ridership revenues and from government tax-generated resources. Although transit is no longer a true profit-motivated enterprise, it still is forced to seek ways to maximize returns through increased ridership or developing ways to get greater revenues through the fares that riders pay. On the other hand, it obtains funds from government subsidies that subject it to political pressures and public policy considerations not ordinarily experienced by private business -- even by the regulated businesses such as the utilities. Thus there is constant tension between the "bottom line" impacts of transit system operational decisions and the public service/subsidy issues normally experienced by public agencies such as education, fire, and police departments.

The Federal government's recent emphasis on "privatization" has helped to blow some healthy fresh air into the thinking about the provision of public transit services. It is causing the transit industry to look more closely at market issues, where the emphasis is on providing services that people are willing to pay for, because they are of a "higher quality" in terms of reliability and overall use satisfaction. Whether the result of this Federal policy initiative will ever produce transit services that are "profitable," requires more experimentation and time, but it is clear that this is having a major impact on the transit industry.

The effort to instill a "private sector" mentality into the transit industry should not end simply with the creation of "more profitable" services or in the development of more efficient management practices. It must also focus on the need to develop markets. The underlying principles of the Greater Bridgeport Transit District's Community and Economic Development Program belong to this broad area of market development. However, in 1981, it was not clear if the need to incorporate this kind of activity within a transit operation had been fully appreciated by the Reagan Administration. With the elimination of the Urban Initiatives program, it appeared that all Federal involvement in joint development activity was dead. Current UMTA funding priorities, however, make it apparent that the joint development concept is alive and well and is being given considerable attention.

B. Results of the Community and Economic Development Program

While joint development appears to have established itself as an acceptable part of the transit development process, a lot more experience is needed before we can establish how much of it is necessary (particularly with an all bus system), and when and where it seems to work best. This is even more true in the case of a program like the GBTD's Community and Economic Development Program which emphasized broader urban revitalization and economic development issues than the specific problems of promoting real estate deals. The results of the District's activist approach to community development show the extreme difficulty of a transit system's involvement in what is locally perceived as a "non-transit" area. Even with time the impacts of the program will be difficult to measure. Over time, many different problems arise with a transit endorsed program that stresses broad community organization and economic development issues. Failure could rest as much on the political savvy of the participants as on the specific merits of the policies or programs undertaken.

We therefore cannot attempt to state definitively whether Bridgeport's activist approach produced results that are measurably different from situations where no community and economic development programs have been fostered by the transit authority. What we can do, however, is make some judgements about the program that are more limited in nature, but can give some measure of usefulness, based mostly on what the program participants themselves sought to achieve.

From this narrower perspective, the following conclusions can be drawn from the material presented above:

1. East Main Street represents the program's greatest success: With a lot of help from other actors and agencies, the District's program resulted in the creation of a viable, self-sustaining merchant organization, substantial public funding for projects, and an increasing investment interest in the area.

2. Fairfield Center is the least successful. Although the town now has an active Economic Development staff that focuses on Fairfield Center, the District only played a small role in creating such a position. From the point of view of the District as an activist in the continuing community and economic development process, this component of the program has failed. However, the process itself, initiated with the help of the District, continues.

3. Downtown Bridgeport is a limited success. Organizationally the District was not able to accomplish what it sought, by its own efforts. In addition, although several of the planning projects have not been brought to a conclusion, the transit planning and capital improvements generated from this work should help to reshape the Downtown.

In broader terms, the Community and Economic Development program has been a success. There is a strengthened appreciation of the role that local area economic conditions play in the District's financial health. Finally, there is a readiness to participate in activities that promote community and economic development, even though those activities may not have been initiated by the District.

In narrower terms, the program was a failure. The returns the program has brought to the District have been viewed as being insufficiently worthwhile for the District to create a permanent Community and Economic Development staff position. This is a reflection of the tension between the "bottom line" and public service aspects of a transit agency. (This conflict is not restricted to transit, but also operates in private sector budgeting decisions.) The District decided that the activist role, conceived of in this program, could not be cost-effectively supported.

C. Conclusions and Recommendations

The major results of the Bridgeport work effort have been described above. There are some overall conclusions about the Community and Economic Development Program that are useful to other transit operators considering a similar program.

Bus Service Flexibility: One of the best aspects of bus service is its routing and stopping flexibility. This permits coverage of multiple destinations in a wide variety of locations. From an investment leveraging point of view, spreading out the stops does not permit the creation of large joint development projects, but from an overall point of view, it can stimulate many smaller opportunities for creative investments by transit agencies and the private sector.

Constraints of Federal Regulations Generally and UMTA Guidelines Specifically: There are at least two problems that people in the trade have been commenting on for years. The experience in Bridgeport confirms the need to make some administrative and/or legis-

lative changes. First, capital improvements projects of \$200,000 require the same applications procedures, etc. as a \$20 million or a \$2 billion project. Something should be done to change this fact so that smaller, yet creative projects don't get lost in the paperwork.

The second UMTA Federal constraint is a much more fundamental problem. UMTA capital projects statutorily prohibit the use of Federal funds to build commercial facilities. Where UMTA-funded projects do produce some form of incidental rental income, UMTA allows lease income to be utilized for eligible transit capital and/or operating costs, but not as local share match. If local agencies are to be cost effective and productive, then they should be permitted to maximize the revenue potentials of the projects they build, regardless of the sources of the funds used to build the project.

Public/Private Leveraging: Private sector skepticism of the public sector's ability to produce makes it very difficult for any public agency to negotiate a deal with a private developer unless the returns appear to be either truly dramatic, or a private firm is particularly desperate.

The Myth of Private Sector Efficiency: A number of Bridgeport's experiences clearly demonstrate that a badly run bureaucracy, whether it is public or private, is a badly run bureaucracy. In one negotiation with a firm, the District was unable to determine how to get a decision made or even who was willing to make it. In another, for over nine months the District dealt with three changes in personnel. For all practical purposes, with every change, it had to completely restart the negotiations, even though it believed a deal was ready to be closed.

Political Constraints: One very clear lesson from the projects undertaken by this program is that success is impossible without a thorough understanding of political realities. Issues of "turf", differences over what types of community and economic development are desirable, and the inertia caused by a pluralistic public decision-making process are stumbling blocks that can upset the most sincere efforts.

Program Costs and Returns: Costs for the entire community and economic development program have not been completely analyzed. However, costs for the

Downtown, from both SMD and Section 8 UMTA grants, probably totalled between \$225 and \$275 thousand over a four year period. Roughly \$70,000 of this was used for consultant services, the remainder for staff, supplies, overhead, and other direct and indirect costs. The direct result of this is the District's Section 5 Downtown capital improvements project recently funded for \$850,000. It also resulted in at least one "rent free" passenger waiting space at a crucial downtown destination.

The Bottom Line Debate is Going On in the Private Sector: An observer, who requests anonymity, after hearing a relatively detailed description of the Transit District's Community and Economic Development program said that, if a private business of similar size and scale undertook a similar role, it would receive numerous awards for civic-minded and innovative business practices.

The fact of the matter is, not all private businesses become actively involved in community and economic development matters. Becoming heavily involved in such activities is actually a debatable issue for the private sector and for a transit authority that only runs an all bus system, since a bottom-line benefit is so difficult to quantify.

Chapter II

Program Background and Purpose

A. Joint Development - A Background

Conventional wisdom says that investment in transportation systems will stimulate economic growth. Conventional wisdom also says that economic growth stimulates demand for and the use of transportation services or systems. More careful examinations of these two premises shows that while there may be an interrelationship between transportation and economic activity, there is a question as to whether investment in transportation systems always stimulates growth. In some cases, it may have a redistributive impact; in others, it has been associated with "new" growth. Under any circumstances, however, it has been even more difficult, if not impossible, to predict exactly when or where economic growth will occur around new or improved transportation systems.

Faced with the prospect that relatively large capital investments in transportation improvements might go unused, some American urban planners and economists began to look for ways to "guarantee" that the desired "economic results" would occur. In the United States, this relatively new field has been called "Joint Development"--the fostering of development along transportation systems which both contributes to economic growth and also stimulates the use of the transportation system. In particular, the Federal Urban Mass Transportation Administration has promoted the study of "Transit Joint Development," in order to help stimulate economic activity among mass transit systems being funded through Federal grants in many cities around the United States.¹

A large proportion of the existing work in transit joint development has concentrated on three general themes. The first theme is the use of "techniques" or "tools" which can be used to make joint development happen. Central to the analysis of techniques has been the concept of "leveraging", where for each dollar of public investment there is a corresponding private investment that is many times larger than the public investment.

In other joint development studies, when technique and

1. See "Transit Station Area Joint Development/Strategies for Implementations" Urban Mass Transportation Administration, U.S. Department of Transportation, 1976, A report prepared for UMTA by the Administration and Management Research Association of N.Y.C. Inc.

leveraging have not been analyzed, the focus has been on "institutional" approaches to fostering joint development with particular attention being paid to "transit corridor development corporations". Finally, other joint development reports have concentrated on the concept of value capture, where the public captures a portion of the resulting economic "windfalls" that accrue to property owners when investment in public transportation is made in a particular area.

This report describes the community and economic development program undertaken by the Greater Bridgeport Transit District, where the approach to joint development was less conventional. While a large proportion of the Bridgeport work still focused on fostering real estate projects in conjunction a major transit service improvement program, the District also attempted to explore joint development in its broadest terms, where the agency became an "activist" in the region's community and economic development processes.

B. Program Objectives

1. To make Joint Development Relevant to Small Cities with Bus Oriented Systems

A review of the literature on Joint Development in the late 1970's, would have revealed that much of this work focused on the problems of large city transit systems, particularly fixed rail systems. About that time the Urban Mass Transportation Administration began to recognize a need to demonstrate how joint development concepts could be applied to smaller urban areas where the primary form of service was buses. As a consequence, the Greater Bridgeport Transit District undertook a joint development program that was jointly funded through UMTA's Demonstration and Planning programs. The primary focus of the work would be to explore how the concept of joint development could be applied to a small urban area with buses as its primary mass transit service.²

2. The Transit Agency as a Community and Economic Development "Activist"

In 1978-79 the joint development project staff at the Greater Bridgeport Transit District believed that there was a second more fundamental problem with many joint development projects and programs--they focused primarily on the concepts of "real estate deal making." This interest in the real estate aspect of

2. Please note that there are more than a hundred cities the size of Bridgeport in the U.S. alone.

the joint development concept was most clearly represented in the value capture reports of Rice Center, and in two other studies prepared for UMTA: Transit Station Area Joint Development: Strategies for Implementation, and Transit Joint Development: Making the Real Estate Connection Work³. It reached its apex when UMTA sponsored two JOINT DEVELOPMENT MARKETPLACE conferences in 1978 and 1980 which attempted to bring together transit operators and local, state and Federal officials with real estate developers in order to create stronger links between Transit systems and the development along transit service corridors.

The interest in real estate deal making had two thrusts: the first was on the use of "techniques" or the use of "leveraging" and/or "value capture" mechanisms which could be used to stimulate development or, in other cases, recapture benefits generated by transit service improvements. Many of these tools such as special benefit tax districts, land write downs, tax increment financing and incentive zoning had been applied in urban renewal and other projects around the country. What the proponents of joint development sought was to have these techniques applied to transit related situations.

The second focus of attention was the need to create better cooperation between the public and private sectors. While the techniques were to act as kind of "lubricant" to the real estate deal, it was clear that these needed to evolve out of a process or where the public and private sectors work together rather than look on each other as antagonists. Thus, considerable attention was paid to the need to create organizational structures that facilitated private and public cooperation--a clearing house where developers would be guided through the bureaucratic maze of government agencies and where the government officials would be able to communicate with the developer on public policy matters.

The ideal version of this partnership (or Co-Venture as UMTA now calls them) was the Transit Corridor Development Corporation, an autonomous agency having many public implementation powers, but with strong private sector leadership and direction.

From the perspective of the Greater Bridgeport Transit District, limiting joint development to real estate deal making was too narrow a focus. In some cases where a potential for a real estate deal might exist a considerable amount of relatively

3. Prepared respectively by The Administration and Management Research Association of New York, 1976 and by The Urban Land Institute, 1979 for UMTA.

unrelated "ground work" usually is needed before this potential could be realized. A conventional approach to the problem might lead to the preparation of a "station area land use plan" or some other physical improvement plan, which would then be followed by efforts to find a developer, public financing and other support. In many cases, the conventional approach leads nowhere because the fundamental problems that discourage investment interest have not been addressed. As will be seen from the cases below, Bridgeport presented an ample opportunity to explore the types of things which could be done as pre-conditions to making a real estate deal.

In its broadest sense joint development should include any transit agency-private sector cooperative effort that resulted in increased economic activity and improved transit ridership and productivity.

The community and economic development program of the Greater Bridgeport Transit District, described below, was based on the premise that maximizing the impacts of new or improved transit services should not be limited to real estate deal making and creating new development institutions. The District's program saw a need for the Agency to become much more involved in a wide variety of public/private cooperative activities including everything from the creation of more effective neighborhood organizations, to organizing street festivals, and developing joint advertising campaigns with local businesses. In other words, the District (or other transit agency) should be strengthening the relationship between its decisions to improve transit and other public and/or private decisions to invest in community development or revitalization around its service corridors. Taking on such a role would mean that the transit industry adopt an active, rather than a passive or reactive, community and economic role traditionally taken by transit agencies.

In many respects the Transit District's program design was drawn from existing private sector models. To varying degrees private businesses, particularly retail and service oriented business, depend on what happens in their surrounding neighborhoods. Whether it is a major downtown corporation or a Mom and Pop grocery store, the business depends to some extent on the economic health and physical condition of its surrounding areas. Thus, the more progressive private businesses, at least, spend staff time and financial resources, not simply on their advertising and their merchandise, but also on community based and cooperative business projects (e.g. street clean-ups, joint advertising or other activity). While many businesses have traditionally relegated such activity to their charitable or public relations departments, many others recognize that such programs make a lot of hard business sense that could have a

direct impact on the "bottom line".

The transit industry is still a market based service. It derives a substantial portion of its revenue from ridership. Its survival depends in part on the strength of the neighborhoods, downtowns and regional centers it services. Like many more progressive businesses, transit providers must become more involved in the planning, development and promotion of areas it serves. The basic objective of the Greater Bridgeport Transit District's Community and Economic Development program then was to identify the kinds of activities which the agency could become involved in that would be consistent with a broader more activist approach to joint development. This did not exclude the need to work cooperatively with private property owners on leveraged real estate deals, it only recognized that there were many other things that could and should be accomplished before a real estate deal could be contemplated.

C. The District's Community and Economic Development Philosophy

Before proceeding with the description of specific Bridgeport area projects, a brief discussion of the approach or philosophy to Community and Economic Development which underlies the Greater Bridgeport Transit District's program will be in order. If anything, it will help the reader understand the overall organization of each of the subsequent chapters.

The District staff believed that community and economic development incorporated the following components:

- * Organization creation or strengthening
- * Planning
- * Support Activities
- * Project Implementation (Financing)

1. Organization

If community and economic development is to successfully proceed, whether it be a neighborhood or downtown, there must be an effective broadly based organization through which people can work. These organizations must have committed private sector, as well as public sector, participation. Existing organizations should be evaluated to determine if they should be strengthened or if new organizations would offer a greater potential for change and/or leadership. This could mean that a transit agency would play a role in Downtown Councils or neighborhood organizations, and, as will be seen below, the District in fact took broadly differing approaches in each of the specific projects it worked on.

2. Planning

No effort at community and economic development will work without a clear set of goals and objectives and a plan to actually achieve these. This planning cannot be arbitrarily determined but must evolve out of the organizations through which people work. Public Transit Agencies have available internal planning capabilities and these capabilities can and should be brought to bear on the development of wider planning objectives and goals. This planning does not need to be limited to physical development, but also can and should incorporate business development and other activities. As will be seen, considerable resources were allocated by the Greater Bridgeport Transit District to support local planning activities and more closely relate the development of transit services to wider community goals.

3. Support Activities

Much community and economic development work focusses on the large project which could result in a new business moving to town, creating new jobs. In other cases, there is considerable emphasis on the physical beautification of neighborhoods, as part of an effort to attract new investment. However, there are a large number of so-called support activities that often have major impacts. These are generally non-physical in nature and often are given less attention than more glamorous development or job promotion projects. Included here are such things as street entertainment programs, street fairs, farmers' markets, joint advertising, crime watches, clean-up programs, and major cultural events. The Greater Bridgeport Transit District sought to explore ways it could become more involved in such support activities.

4. Development Finance/Project Implementation

Finally, to make community and economic development happen requires in the end, financing, either from public or preferably from private sources. The Transit District sought to explore ways that its grantsmanship capacities could be put together with a knowledge of private sector financing to make projects actually work.

D. Program Activities Summarized

The Community and Economic Development Program concentrated most of its activities in three distinct areas:

- * Bridgeport's Central Business District
- * Fairfield Center - A Suburban Subcenter
- * East Main Street - A Neighborhood Commercial Center

Many of the specific activities eventually undertaken in each of these areas were chosen in a somewhat arbitrary fashion. The reasons for undertaking some projects only became fully apparent in hindsight. What follows is a brief summary of the project activities and accomplishments.

1. Downtown Bridgeport

All of the Transit District's fifteen bus routes except for one run through the Downtown. Like most transit agencies, what happens in the City's Downtown area has had and will continue to have a direct and dramatic impact on the overall health of the service. There was, therefore, little or no question of our need to become involved in the Downtown revitalization process.

Activities in Downtown Bridgeport included:

1. Fund raising for and the promotion of Streets For People, an arts, music and entertainment program;
2. Support for the creation of a downtown development council;
3. Preparation of a downtown Transit joint development plan (UMTA funded) out of which came the so-called bus "loop" for downtown operations, a plan for transit pedestrian sidewalk improvements, as well as proposals for traditional real estate joint development projects.

The Streets for People was successfully run for one summer season, with other programs such as "Arts Alive," a street entertainment program, being follow-ons of a similar type undertaken by other local groups. A downtown bus routing plan has been implemented which included some important concepts found within the Loop concept. The District also applied for and obtained \$850,000 of UMTA Section 5 capital funding to implement a portion of the recommended pedestrian/transit street improvements program. Actual implementation should begin some time in 1984. The District also engaged in negotiations with property owners in sites adjacent to downtown bus stops to obtain commitments for additional sidewalk space and other improvements. At this writing these negotiations still are not complete.

2. Fairfield Center

This project is at the heart of Bridgeport's largest suburb, Fairfield. Here a commuter rail station, several of the District's bus routes, and the routes of the Fairfield "Mini Mover" all converge. While the center appears to be facing difficulties, the underlying economic conditions are essentially strong. This presented an opportunity to develop an approach to Community and Economic Development where there was little need to combat negative economic conditions.

The District, in cooperation with the Fairfield Economic Development Commission, prepared an economic evaluation as to Fairfield Center's Development potentials. The report indicated a modest level of demand for retail/office development but also indicated major constraints to development. (1) The high asking prices for land; (2) zoning constraints; (3) lack of parking facilities. While Fairfield Center presented some of the greatest potential, the actual progress made during the study period 1980-1983 was relatively modest. The town government, particularly the planning and zoning department, was very protective of its turf, precluding an active role on the part of the District in addressing business and community organizations and a re-evaluation of the Development Controls in the Center area.

3. East Main Street Commercial Revitalization

Bridgeport's East Side neighborhood, like many inner city neighborhoods, has experienced intensive post-World War II decline. However, upon closer examination the strengths and uniqueness of this neighborhood became very apparent. It was extensively served by the existing bus routes and there were clear signs of citizen and business support for revitalization in the East Side. (For example, banking and insurance companies and citizen groups were working together to support a very successful Neighborhood Housing Services Program.) The neighborhood's commercial corridor, East Main Street, clearly needed attention and, although quite decayed, strong business leadership was there and the District became convinced it could be successfully revitalized.

District Staff activities on East Main included: preparation of a District/City funded needs and opportunities assessment, street improvements plan, and revitalization program plan; creation of a community and merchant association expressly aimed at revitalizing the Neighborhood Commercial Corridor; fund raising; development finance packaging assistance.

The results thus far have been: the designation of the East Main Street project as a national demonstration in neighborhood

Reinvestment Corporation. A permanent staff member and the creation of the East Main Street Revitalization Association with a commitment of merchant as well other business resources to support staff for the organization; commitment of \$150,000 toward a revolving loan fund for facade improvements; commitment of \$200,000 of UMTA Section 5 capital funds for bus stop related improvements at critical points along the street.

CHAPTER III

Project Areas - Identification and Selection

The concept behind the Transit District's Community and Economic Development Program was to begin work in two or perhaps three locations. This early work was exploratory in nature and was designed to demonstrate what might be undertaken by a Transit District placing very few limits on what could or should be done. After this so-called experimental stage lasting about a year and a half, the District then attempted to expand the program to other locations in the region.

A. Selection of Initial Project Areas

During the first year and a half the District worked primarily in four distinct areas. These are (see Map III-1):

- * Downtown Bridgeport
- * The East Side/East Main Street Neighborhood of Bridgeport
- * The South End Neighborhood
- * Fairfield Center

Self-interest was the District's primary reason for selecting these sites. In each the District had existing high volumes of transit service, was planning substantial improvements to service, and/or was developing special Transit Demonstration projects.

1. Downtown Bridgeport: All routes but one operated by the District in 1979 ran into or through the Downtown. This area was the target of the City of Bridgeport's own revitalization efforts and if the District was to succeed in revitalizing its services then it, like almost every operating system in the country, would need to play a role in the Downtown.

2. The East Side (Bridgeport): Not far from the Downtown, the East Side of Bridgeport also had a relatively high concentration of existing bus service. More importantly the District has designated the area as the target of its "Inner City Transit Demonstration" project, where the District is seeking to demonstrate how shared ride taxi and other transit alternatives could succeed in an inner city location. The Community and Economic development program was to be coordinated closely with the development of this new service, strengthening the prospects for ultimate success.

3. Fairfield Center: In 1979, this large suburban Community contained relatively little existing District Service. However, the District was planning to develop alternative transit services that had succeeded in other suburban communities, -- mini buses and/or shared ride taxi services. The old commercial center of town also contained a commuter railroad stop and it was believed that this area would become a focal point of new and improved Transit District services.

4. South End (Bridgeport): This neighborhood was considered as an alternative neighborhood for the inner city transit demonstration work. It also contained the region's largest University and was immediately adjacent to the Downtown. Traffic and transportation access to this portion of the City was an important issue, and the project staff believed that the District could play a role in revitalization efforts there.

B. Identification of Potential Future Sites

As indicated above, after about a year and a half, the District sought to expand its Community and Economic Development work into other areas of the region. There were other locations within the region appearing to have great potential for community and economic development activity which could complement overall efforts to build demand for transit service in the area. In addition, District Board members were concerned that no attention was being given to the other towns within the District (Trumbull and Stratford).

1. Identification

The District therefore began a comprehensive review of potential locations within the area. It did this first by identifying bus stops with the greatest amount of ridership, and supplementing this with information obtained from the city, on current conditions in specific areas, and a review of data on current development activity (when available). The areas identified through this process are shown in Exhibit III-1 and Map III-1.

2. Evaluation Criteria

Before proceeding further the project staff prepared a set of criteria to be used in evaluating each potential site. The criteria was divided into two basic groups: transit related issues, and development potentials.

Transit related Criteria

- * Volume of transit ridership - existing
- * Potential transit ridership increase
- * Potential for improved access transit
- * Potential to improve overall system operational efficiency - (reduce travel times etc.)

Community Development Criteria

- * Market conditions
- * Strength of local organizations - business neighborhoods
- * Potential for physical development land assemblages zoning restraints.
- * Potential for and/or need for overall traffic circulation improvements
- * Local government support
- * Local political support

Some of the specific issues considered in reaching conclusions about these criteria are described in Exhibit III-2.

3. Preliminary Evaluation

The list of potential sites was then given a preliminary review according to the overall set of criteria established above. An example of this work is presented in Exhibit III-3 of this report.

C. Status of Work Effort

About the time the preliminary site evaluations were being completed, the Reagan Administration took office, resulting in the revision of the Urban Initiatives Program. Discussions with UMTA clearly indicated that we should not proceed with projects that could lead to additional UMTA participation, at least until the nature of new funding and program proposals were made clear. In addition, the Greater Bridgeport Transit District's Board of Directors was pessimistic about obtaining further funding for any community and economic development efforts.

After consultation with UMTA, it was agreed that the future work under the Community and Economic Development program would focus almost entirely on the existing three part project areas (East Main Street, Fairfield Center, and Downtown). Thus, by the fall of 1981 all further work on potential sites was discontinued.

MAP III-1
Potential CED Study Areas

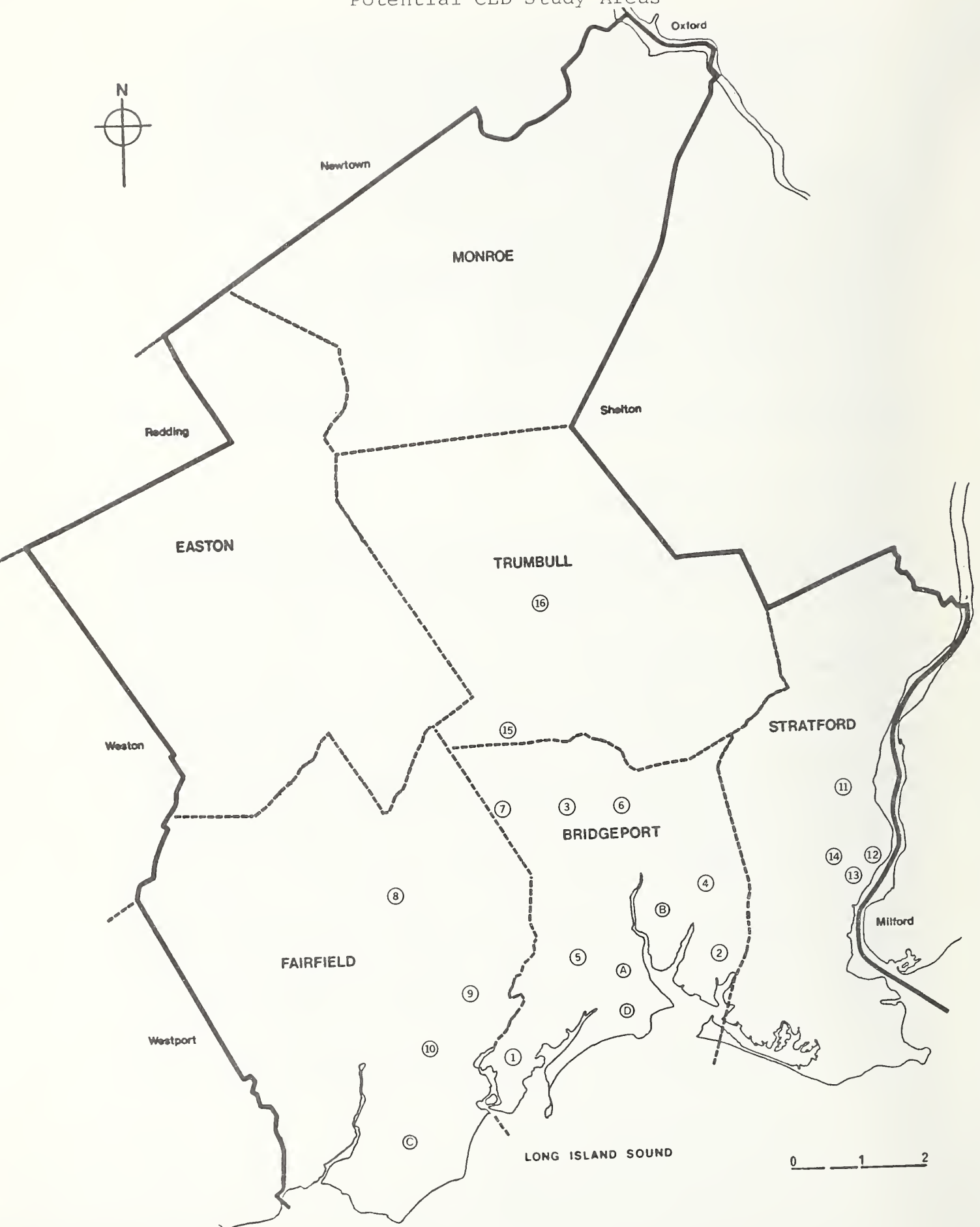


Exhibit III-1
Community and Economic Development
Project Sites

INITIAL STUDY

- A. Downtown Bridgeport
- B. Fairfield Center
- C. East Side/East Main (Bridgeport)
- D. South End (Bridgeport)

POTENTIAL FOR PROGRAM EXPANSION

- Bridgeport:
 - 1. Black Rock-Fairfield Avenue
 - 2. East End-(Stratford Ave and/or Newfield Park
 - 3. North Main Street
 - 4. Boston Avenue
 - 5. North Ave & Park
 - 6. Beardsley Terrace
 - 7. Park Avenue North
- Fairfield:
 - 8. Black Rock Turnpike (North)
 - 9. Caldor/Bradlee's Shopping Cntr.
 - 10. Fairfield Univ. area
- Stratford:
 - 11. Paradise Green
 - 12. Dock Shopping Center
 - 13. Railroad Station
 - 14. Town Hall
- Trumbull
 - 15. Trumbull Shopping Pk.
 - 16. Town Hall

Exhibit III-2

Evaluation of Potential Transit/Community Economic Development Sites

A. Criteria

Transit

- * Volume of existing ridership
- * Potential for ridership increase
- * Potential for improved access to transit - look for stop location problems, poor crosswalk locations, potential for weather protected spaces.
- * Potential to improve transit circulation in immediate area: look for signal problems, pull off problems, route shorteners, etc.
- * Potential to improve overall system operations: could development in area result in reduced travel times and improved connections/transfers.

Community Development

- * Market conditions: Is there a perception that demand for new development is high
- * Strength of organizations: Are there strong residential and/or business organizations actively working in the area. Is there a potential to create one.
- * Potential for physical development - is there vacant land, could land be assembled. Are properties for sale. Are there development proposals being considered.
- * Traffic Problems and Improvement Potential: identify possible delay/accident/congestion points. Identify parking problems, if any.
- * Local Government Support - does the government plan to do anything in or for the area.
- * Local Political Support: Do GBTD Board Members view this as a priority location and are there other political representatives from the area who strongly seek improvement to the area.

Exhibit III-3

No. 1
SITE Black Rock/Fairfield Ave.
Bridgeport

Transit

Served by Routes _____ # _____			
Existing Transit Ridership	High _____	Medium _____	Low <u>X</u> _____
Potential for improved access	High _____	Medium <u>X</u> _____	Low _____
Potential for improved transit Calculation	High _____	Medium _____	Low <u>X</u> _____
Potential for improved system operations	High _____	Medium _____	Low <u>X</u> _____

Comments

Only one route runs through this neighborhood, there appears too little need for improving transit service here except for shelter and other bus stop improvements.

Community Development

Market Conditions	Strong _____	Moderate <u>X</u> _____	Weak _____
Local Organization	Strong <u>X</u> _____	Moderate _____	Weak _____

Comments:

Physical Development Potential High _____ Medium X _____ Low _____

Comments:

Traffic Circulation Improvement	Strong _____	Moderate _____	None <u>X</u> _____
Local Government Support	Strong _____	Moderate _____	None <u>X</u> _____
Local Political support	Strong _____	Moderate <u>X</u> _____	None _____

Comments:

Meetings were held with Community Council leadership and with the owners of several businesses. They are looking for help on sidewalks and facade improvements. Talks with City Hall indicated almost no interest in pursuing work here.

CHAPTER IV

Downtown Bridgeport

A. National Applicability

Downtown Bridgeport is like the centers of many older cities, with declining retail trade, office vacancies, a poor image (for example, a perception of high crime), and some areas of physical decay and disrepair. On the other hand, it also shows signs of relative strength in other areas. In particular, there is a strong service business sector centered around banking, finance, and legal services: in fact, Bridgeport is the fourth largest banking center in New England. Downtown also has some excellent architecture and historically significant structures and has very good highway, rail and Amtrak access, along with year-round ferry services to Port Jefferson, L.I.

The materials which follow indicate how small cities can use their own planning efforts to improve transit services in a small city downtown to identify real estate projects which could be implemented through conventional joint development techniques. The projects vary in size from waiting rooms to larger scale pedestrian circulation improvements which could tie the downtown together. The fact that some of these proposed projects were not implemented confirms (in part at least) that there is need to build a stronger public private partnership before successful planning can actually occur. The effort to create a downtown council and a streets entertainment program also indicates two of many steps that a transit agency may take to create a better partnership.

B. Introduction

At the time of the start-up of the Transit District's demonstration project, the City and the business community appeared to be focusing most of their hopes for revitalization on the construction of a major Convention Center/Hotel project. In actual fact, not too many people outside of City Hall believed that the project would be built. The City also was promoting a second development, Ferry Boat Junction, a project which combined an old ferryboat restaurant (New York City, Staten Island Ferry) and a "Farmers' Market," fresh produce outlet to be built in an old railroad station building adjacent to the ferry boat. This project also was viewed with skepticism. Considerable press was devoted to the failure of the City to successfully obtain a poorly prepared UDAG grant application, designed to finance both the ferry boat restaurant

and an amusement park project located at a magnificent area on Long Island Sound called Pleasure Beach.

While documents had been prepared presenting an overall Downtown revitalization plan, in fact the plan was not being implemented with any kind of coordinated public-private activity. Private sector confidence in and support for Downtown revitalization could be characterized as being half-hearted (with some notable exceptions such as People's Savings Bank).

From the Transit District's point of view, what could or would happen in Downtown is of vital importance. Like most fixed-route bus services, Bridgeport's focuses on the Downtown. There is no question that the District needed to devote much attention to improving services there. The existing bus services reflect the fact that there was little or no coordination between the four private companies that until 1979 operated the buses. This lack of coordination resulted in a confusing route system, poor public information, inadequate transfer opportunities, and no access to some destinations.

The Transit District's program in the CBD focused on three different areas:

- * Creation of a public/private organization whose primary responsibility would be Downtown Development;
- * Preparation of traditional transit improvement and joint development plans for the Downtown;
- * Creation of people-oriented activities that would stimulate interest in Downtown.

C. Organization - Bridgeport's Downtown Council

The Community and Economic Development staff at the Transit District believed that successful downtown revitalization would be dependent on the creation of a viable, well-funded public/-private organization whose sole purpose would be to promote development business, and fun activities in the area. Several major cities such as Atlanta had created just such organizations and in many cases they have been found to be important to the overall success of revitalization programs.

In trying to develop a case for a downtown development council the District's Community and Economic Development project staff researched models around the country and lent assistance in developing a proposed organizational structure for the City of Bridgeport which included a broadly based organization with very

strong development and financing powers. Initially, the Downtown Council concept, which was promoted by one of the City's major banks, met with considerable opposition from the Chamber of Commerce, and the City's major industrial development corporation: The Bridgeport Economic Development Corporation (BEDCO). Opposition to the Downtown Development Council was based on questions of turf ("why create a new organization?"), on money problems and on serious questions about the appropriateness of the concept to Bridgeport's situation.

With the failure of the effort to form a Downtown Council in 1979-80 the District was forced to create its own advisory council for its downtown planning efforts (that began in 1980) and recreate such a group for its capital improvements program (beginning in 1983). Neither of the forums proved entirely satisfactory because they were too narrowly focussed on Transit District projects, and required considerable organizational support. Without existing within an organization with wider responsibilities and objectives, the District's work generated only moderate interest and activity.

The dissatisfaction with the institutional status quo prompted the District to support other initiatives to create public/-private planning and implementation for the Downtown. Thus during 1981 through early 1983 the District staff lent considerable support to efforts to create a Downtown Council within the Chamber of Commerce. The District was brought into this organization as one of its board members and its staff took an aggressive role in the activities of several Council committees.

As experience from other cities has shown, however, creating Downtown Councils within larger Chamber of Commerce efforts does not always work well. When the Bridgeport Chamber of Commerce (reformed as the Greater Bridgeport Commerce and Industry Council) ran into internal financial as well as internal differences on overall organizational priorities, this second effort at creating a Downtown Council fizzled (by early 1983). As of this writing (early 1984), a new Downtown Council has been created, in which the District has remained an active partner.

D. Planning

As part of its downtown program, the District also sought and obtained an UMTA-funded technical studies grant. The resulting Downtown system and joint development planning work, described below, occurred over an 8-month period, beginning in 1979. The District obtained excellent assistance from a consultant team composed of Cambridge Systematics, Inc., Moore-Heder, Urban Designers, and Economics Research Associates. Initial planning

work was completed in December 1980, with the release of a report called A Plan for Downtown Transit and Joint Development.

This plan contained three elements:

- * A "loop" bus circulation plan
- * Pedestrian Transit Street Improvements Plans
- * Proposed Joint Development Projects

1. Recommended Bus Routing Pattern - "The Loop" (Exhibit IV-1). The proposed plan creates a loop pattern composed of Fairfield Avenue and Broad, State, and Middle Streets on which all buses entering the downtown will operate. Buses on routes which terminate in the downtown will circle the entire loop while buses on through routes will run over the loop before exiting from the downtown.

The Loop circulation scheme was selected because it provides significant transit service benefits to and within the downtown. It also provides strong support for a program of street improvements that will greatly enhance the environment for bus passengers and pedestrians in the areas that are most critical for improving the downtown's potential for economic revitalization. While other bus circulation schemes were somewhat better from a bus operational point of view, the operation of the proposed Loop should pose no major problems and its other advantages outweigh the operational considerations. Specifically, the Loop:

- * provides a clear and simple bus route pattern;
- * facilitates transfers;
- * connects major activity areas;
- * eliminates bus operations from congested streets;
- * supports a parking management strategy;
- * supports a street improvement program;
- * supports a number of existing joint development opportunities.

All these factors supported the selection of the Loop pattern for downtown bus circulation in conjunction with specific measures to minimize any bus operational problems posed by the system. While other alternatives offered similar transit service benefits for downtown, the Loop provides the strongest

support for coordinated efforts at improving street and pedestrian conditions, developing joint development projects, and enhancing overall economic development potential.

Before continuing with a description of other parts of the plan, it would be worth commenting on the reasons for rejecting some of the other alternatives. At least 12 or 13 possibilities were reviewed. Among these were a Transit Mall for Main Street and a new Bus Terminal in the heart of the Downtown. A Transit Mall was rejected because it did not provide any dramatic operational improvements for the system (as opposed to Portland, Oregon's, which saw dramatic improvement in travel times in the Downtown as a result of its malls). More importantly, a Transit Mall probably would kill off what is left of the commercial life on Main Street. The cars, (parking and moving traffic), contribute to a sense of activity. Removing most of this vehicular traffic would have created more problems than it would have helped.

Similarly, a new Bus Terminal, which possibly might create a major joint development opportunity, put all of our eggs in one basket. Terminals may make sense in places of "higher" congestion, such as Denver, but they also reduce much of the destination and operational flexibility advantages of buses, even in a downtown as small as Bridgeport's. Joint development projects over Bus Terminals are complex structurally and functionally, and given Bridgeport's delicate market conditions, would have been an overly ambitious project to design and finance.

2. Recommended Pedestrian/Transit Street Improvements. In conjunction with the recommended bus circulation scheme, a program of street improvements and pedestrian amenities has been developed specifically for downtown Bridgeport. These improvements will facilitate pedestrian movement, define the bus transfer points and upgrade the image of the transit system and the downtown as a whole. These elements include:

- * bus shelters (or bus arcades)
- * lighting
- * information kiosks and signs
- * trees and tree guards
- * new sidewalk pavement
- * street furniture and other amenities

A comprehensive plan for such improvements was prepared. The estimated cost for the total program of recommended street/-pedestrian improvements (exclusive of any joint development projects) is approximately \$3.5 million. While the greatest overall impact on the downtown could be achieved by implementing the entire package of improvements, there are logical segments and project elements which can be accomplished individually and

the plan can be implemented in phases. As will be seen below, the plan is being implemented in phases.

3. Joint Development Projects. A key objective of the project was to identify strategies and individual projects through which the City, the Transit District, and the private business community could maximize the community and economic development impacts of the improved transit services. A key contribution to such an effort would be the pedestrian/transit street improvements, not only because of the improvements they would make to the quality of transit service, but also the improvement they would make to Downtown's image and the overall pedestrian environment. The study also recommended that the District proceed to foster the implementation of a number of small- and large-scaled projects.

a. Small-scaled Projects

Included here are projects that will improve transit service quality and, at the same time, help stimulate new investment and reinvestment in the CBD. The specific projects identified are as follows:

Moving Company Cafe would involve the rehabilitation of 6,000 square feet of vacant and unfinished store front space adjacent to the State Street entrance at Crossroads Mall into a combined restaurant and bus waiting facility. This would eliminate the current conflicts between waiting riders and shoppers at the Plaza entrance, and provide an attractive, comfortable, climate-controlled waiting area, and greatly improve the physical appearance of the State Street entrance to the Mall.

Costs were estimated at \$415,000. The Transit District would seek \$165,000 from the UMTA Urban Initiatives Program to fund the street and interior transit waiting space improvements, and the remaining commercial portion would be privately financed. While final commitments would await final design and cost estimates and the necessary approvals, preliminary discussions with UMTA and Mall management indicated that this project could be implemented within one year.

The Read's/Arcade Block contained a historic landmark pedestrian arcade that connected Main Street to Read's Department Store and Broad Street. It is located in the heart of the Downtown and would be at the heart of

the Downtown Loop. Improvements to this area would be a rehabilitation of the existing Arcade space and an extension of the skylighted walkway to the full length of the passageway between Broad and Main Streets. This would serve as a connector for pedestrians from Main Street to a major bus stop on Broad Street and would support an intensification of retail activity in the area.

Costs for all improvements were estimated at \$3 million. The financial feasibility of the project was examined and it was recommended that the District, City and private owners of the property in the Read's/Arcade block pursue a capital grant of \$600,000 either from UMTA or HUD for the public passageway improvements, and a combination of CDA or EDA subsidized loans for \$2.4 million of private sector financing.

Wall Street Mini-Park would create a new and interesting pedestrian space along a street which currently serves no significant traffic function. This would strengthen the east/west pedestrian movement and connections to bus stops on Middle Street and at the bus terminal and to the transportation complex.

The costs for Wall Street improvements were estimated at \$289,000. These improvements would be coordinated with rehabilitation of existing properties on the south side of Wall Street, and the redevelopment of the "Block."

b. Larger Development Projects

The study's economic analysis showed that a large new office development is needed, if Bridgeport is going to successfully draw major tenants to the Central Business District. Several sites were analyzed, among them the three parcels found within the East Downtown development zone, which includes the "Block", and the Gimbels' "Green" site. While the "Block" was already recognized as a critical development site, the report recommended that "some consideration also should be given to developing Gimbels' (now Read's) "Green" because of its proximity to parking, the proposed Convention Center, and Lafayette Plaza (now Crossroads Mall)."

E. Project Implementation

Since December 1980, the District has proceeded to work on three different fronts:

- * Obtain Capital funding for the Pedestrian/Transit Street Improvements
- * Refine and modify the bus operations and route plans for the Loop
- * Negotiate Joint Development deals

1. Capital Funding. By late 1980, with the election of the Reagan administration, the UMTA Urban Initiatives was revised. At first, most people believed the Downtown project was dead. However, a review of Section 3 and 5 capital resources available to the region permitted the District to apply for a little over \$1 million of Section 5 funding to implement segments of the District's capital improvements programs being proposed for the Downtown and the East Main Street projects. The Downtown portion of the grant, totalling \$850,000, would permit construction of about \$500,000 in bus shelters, lighting and other bus related sidewalk improvements; \$165,000 in improvements to the Crossroads Mall waiting room; and \$50,000 of improvements to the downtown bus terminal; with the remaining funds being allocated to Design, Management and contingencies. From a project point of view, the demise of the Urban Initiatives program may have hurt the District's ability to obtain sufficient monies to do a more complete job on the proposed street and sidewalk improvement plan. However, from the demonstration point of view, it may have helped, because it has forced both the District and UMTA to directly face both legal and resource allocation questions on the use of UMTA's capital funds. Using Urban Initiatives funding would have begged these questions.

In Bridgeport's case, a decision was made to use a relatively large portion of the region's capital funding to make bus related improvements in the Downtown. From UMTA's point of view, the problem is: how much flexibility does the law allow for the use of UMTA funded bus related street and sidewalk improvements? Given this question, preparing an acceptable application was, for awhile, a frustrating process for both UMTA and the District. The discussions focused on how much of the proposed improvements are really transit-related -- where does the transit system's use of sidewalk begin and where does it stop? Are street trees needed for the successful operation of a bus stop? The answer to these questions actually will rest on the specific site issues, and, thus, in June 1981, UMTA approved

\$750,000 of funding for the project, pending the results of site specific designs. UMTA also approved an additional \$298,000 in September of 1981, of which about \$198,000 went to the East Main Street Project, described in Chapter VI. Implementation of the grant was delayed almost a year, because of difficulties in gaining State approval for the local match to the grant. However, State funding approvals were finally obtained in July 1982, and an Architectural and Engineering team has been selected to assist in the designs.

2. Loop Bus Operations. At the time the Downtown Transit Plan was released, the District knew that a number of operational problems needed to be resolved before the loop could be made to work. Late in 1981, once UMTA funding approval had been obtained for the bus related sidewalk and joint development projects, the District began to work on the actual operations in earnest. To do this, the District obtained traffic engineering assistance from the Greater Bridgeport Regional Planning Agency. The work included a detailed traffic and bus waiting study and a negotiating process (particularly the City's Police Department) that is, as of this writing, still incomplete. As a result of this work, the Loop Plan has been modified according to the map shown in Exhibit IV-2. At least four alternative loop concepts were evaluated in considerable detail based on ten different criterial found in Exhibit IV-3. Without elaborating in too great detail, the plan modifications were dictated by the following factors:

- * Street configurations, too costly to rectify at several key intersections, presented difficult turning movement problems for our buses.
- * City agencies were unwilling to accept a key reversal in street direction that would have been required for the plan.

The result therefore, has been a modified Loop plan that keeps most northbound bus routes on Main Street. In early 1984, the District was negotiating with the business community on the acceptance of downtown traffic and parking modifications that would be necessary to make the modified Loop plan operational.

3. Joint Development Negotiations. As presented above, several adjoining development projects along the Loop were identified and analyzed. The so-called "Block" site in the heart of Downtown has become the focus of a public/private UDAG proposal at HUD, for a large office (180,000 sq. ft.), hotel (350 rooms) and parking complex. Within this project is a commitment by the City to build an additional \$300,000 of street and sidewalk

improvements consistent with the Districts' Downtown Plan.

Negotiations on the Reads/Arcade block project also progressed quite far. However, Read's management then negotiated a deal to move into the old Gimbel's store across Broad Street and closer to the revitalized Crossroads Mall. The City and the Downtown Development Council have not dropped the overall concept, and depending on the outcome of the "Block" (UDAG) negotiations, the project could be revived sometime in the near future.

The Crossroads Mall waiting room (The People Moving Company Cafe) has had an up and down history. The first reaction of Hammerson Properties, who manages the Mall, was "We are very interested, but come back and talk when you have some money." In August of 1981, we were able to tell them we had the Federal commitment to fund our portion of the proposed facility. After some discussions, we agreed to prepare a concept design. This design showed a strong inter-relationship between the bus passenger waiting space and an adjacent eating and drinking facility to be constructed in the remainder of an unoccupied retail space. We were interested in such a relationship because it could reduce security and maintenance problems.

The Mall management agreed in principal to provide the space rent free, and agreed to support us in our effort to get the required approvals from relevant city agencies for building frontage and sidewalk changes (e.g. fire hydrant relocations) that our designs required. They also agreed to begin a search for an appropriate tenant for the adjacent space.

By mid-October of 1981, the Mall management had found a tenant to occupy the retail space -- something that Hammerson had never been able to do since the Mall opened over 10 years ago. However, this tenant, while being an eating and drinking facility, also wanted nothing to do with integrating their space with the proposed waiting room. This has required a major rethinking of the concept designs. In addition, the management of the Mall also wanted us to build the space by November 25th, 1981 in order to coincide with the opening of the new Read's Department Store that was relocating into space occupied by Gimbels on State Street directly across from the proposed waiting room. We told Hammerson that moving that fast was impossible without State approvals for the local matches on our grants.

The Mall management, at its expense, and according to its own designs, then proceeded to build a temporary bus waiting space of its own. They felt they had to create an alternative waiting space for bus passengers in order to alleviate the pedestrian congestion at their main entrance on State Street. From our point of view, the temporary space presented major security and

operational problems. We feared these problems could kill the waiting room concept entirely if the temporary facility proved to be a problem.

The temporary facility was built, and has met with mixed results. The negotiations on our lease for a permanent facility have ceased, at the direction of the Mall management, and the facility has been eliminated from the grant budget.

F. Support Activities

1. Streets for People. The District's Downtown work effort began not with the development of a plan but with a focus on the need to develop more people-oriented activities. It viewed this as being part of a broad approach to overall downtown revitalization, which would include festivals and other activities that might bring people into the downtown.

From a Downtown revitalization point of view, and from the point of view of creating more security on streets and sidewalks served by our bus system, the Transit District saw a primary and immediate need to provide the Downtown with "enjoyable and exciting things to do and to create spaces both indoors and outdoors where these things can happen." The City and private businesses and the mass transit provider in the region need to encourage festive activities in the City's streets, parks and plazas. These activities include:

- * farmers markets
- * craft fairs
- * ethnic festivals
- * swap markets
- * flea markets
- * street entertainment such as music and magic shows
- * parades and other activities
- * street theatre

The District recognized that a large number of these types of programs already existed in the City that were successful (the Barnum Festival, for example). But, in some respects, these programs did not focus on the Downtown or other areas directly served by bus services. Greater coordination was therefore needed between many existing activities and new programs were needed that focused on sections of the City where no such activity existed.

The Transit District Demonstration staff researched a wide variety of programs, made several site visits and prepared a report, proposing the creation of a new organization: Streets

for People, Bridgeport, Inc. This new organization was to be a not-for-profit, and permanently staffed one. It was dedicated to the following goals: (1) to identify, expand upon, and actively promote the street activities already a viable and integral part of Bridgeport's rich ethnic background, (2) to initiate additional activities, and (3) to oversee the promotion of these activities on a year-round basis in the CBD and throughout the City. The street activities program would be an inexpensive way to make something happen, improve street and sidewalk security, draw people to areas they hadn't been to or returned to in a long time, and finally, improve the City's image.

In 1979, with help from two local banks, City Savings and People's Savings Bank, and other local not-for-profit organizations, such as the Bridgeport Area Foundation, a fund raising goal was established of \$20,000, a staff person hired to direct the program, and an initial focus on Downtown was agreed upon. The activities program focused on music and street entertainment that ran in the Downtown between July and September of 1979. Most of the fund raising objective was reached. From a participation and a press coverage point of view, the project was a success.

Streets for People lasted less than a year. Based on the public attendance and coverage, the project was quite successful, indicating that if people have something interesting to see or go to, they will come to the downtown. Private sector support for the program was only lukewarm, because the business community was not convinced that continuing such programs would lead to long-termed revitalization. The approach was clearly at odds with the conventional wisdom in Bridgeport as to what could be done to get the downtown going again. At the end of 1979 the Transit District decided to end its support for the program, and while other "people-oriented" projects such as "Arts Alive" were organized in 1980 and 1981, they still have not spun off the kinds of growth and private sector sponsorship which would be necessary to have a major impact.

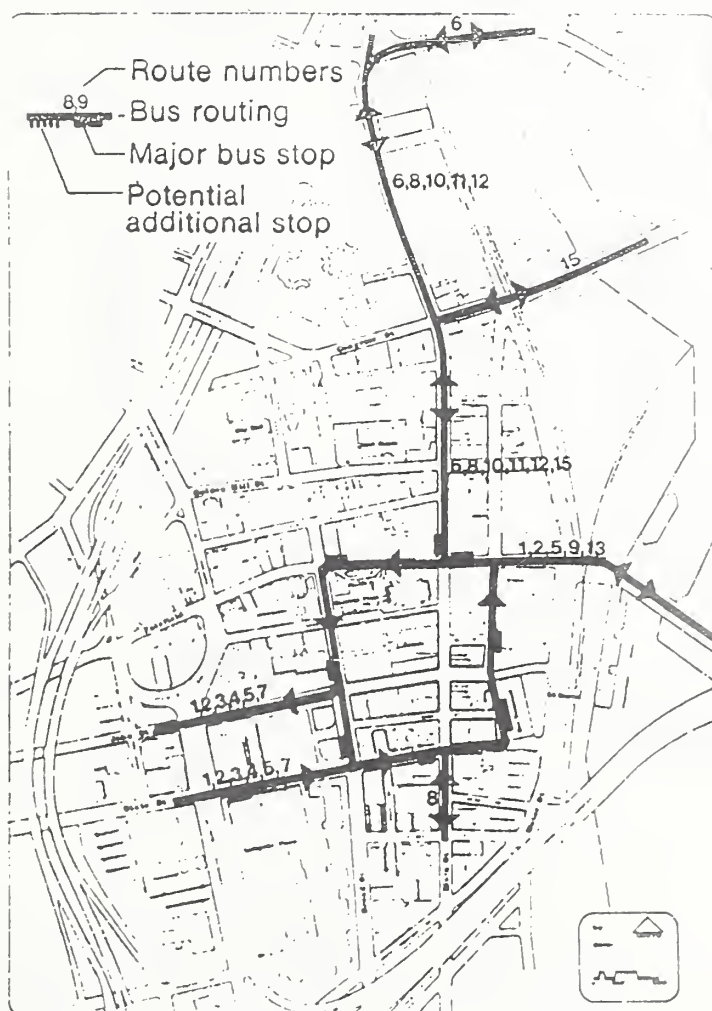
2. Other Support Activities. The Streets for People program in Downtown was the District's most ambitious effort at program support for Downtown revitalization. The Bridgeport Chamber of Commerce followed this effort with a more concentrated two-day festival called Arts Alive. The District staff lent some organizational support to this effort.

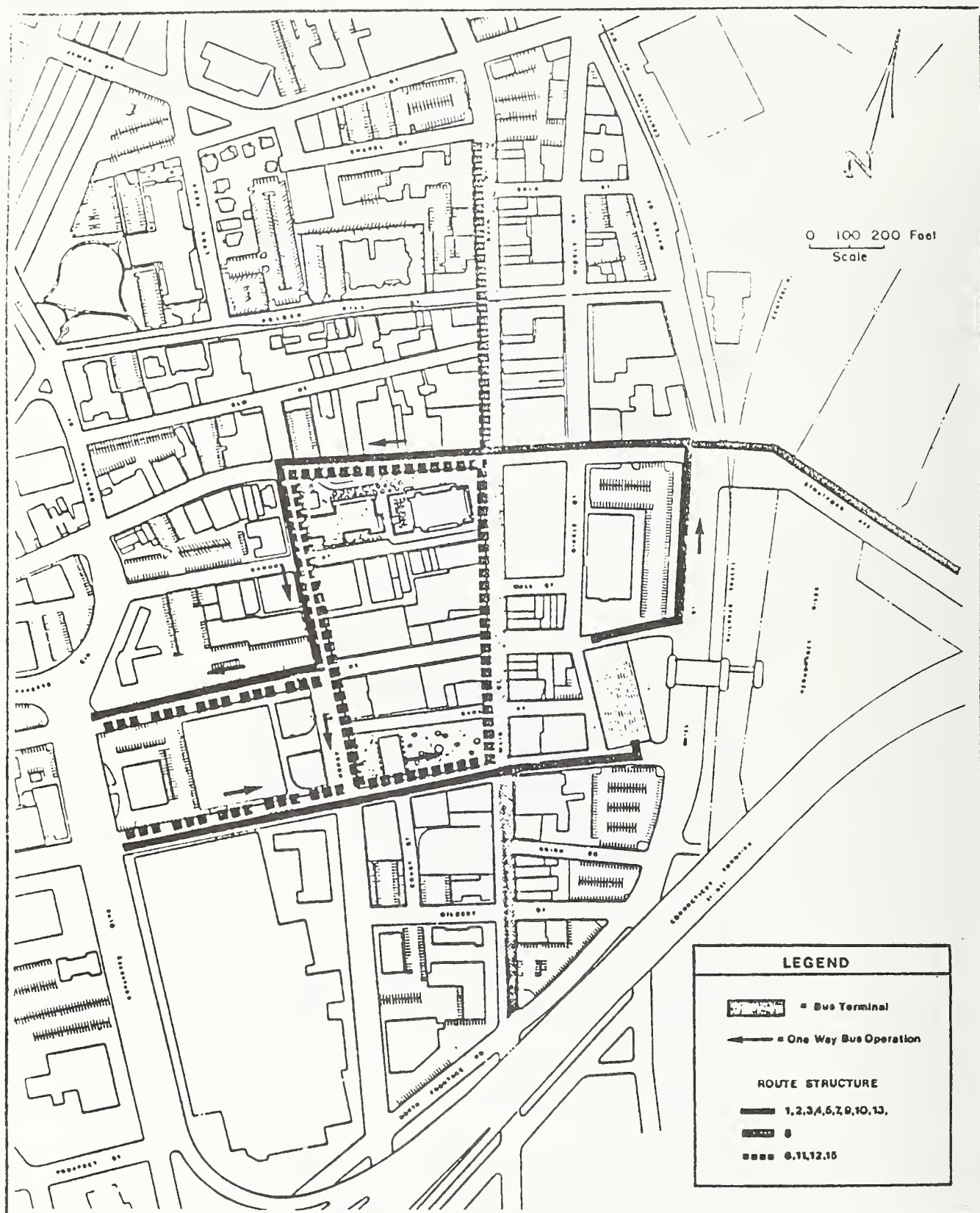
The District also played a major role in promoting Bridgeport at the Second Transit Joint Development Conference held in Washington in 1980. As described earlier in this chapter, the

Community and Economic Development staff also played a continuing role in support of efforts to create a viable Downtown Council.

Exhibit IV-1

Recommended Bus Circulation Plan





RECOMMENDED ROUTE NETWORK BRIDGEPORT CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT

Exhibit IV-3
SUMMARY OF EVALUATIONS
ALTERNATIVE ROUTING STRATEGIES
BRIDGEPORT CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT

TEST PLAN

	ONE	TWO	THREE	FOUR
	THE LOOP	MAIN STREET	WATER STREET	MIDDLE STREET
CRITERIA	(Refer Figure 4-1)	(Refer Figure 4-3)	(Refer Figure 4-4)	(Refer Figure 4-5)
TRAFFIC VOLUME AND ROADWAY CAPACITY ⁽¹⁾ CONSIDERATIONS	Level of Service (LOS) reduced at five intersection approaches from ex- isting conditions.	Relative to Test Plan 1, LOS improve- ment at one location and LOS reduction at one location.	Relative to Test Plan 1, LOS improve- ment at two locations, possible LOS reduc- tion at one location.	Relative to Test Plan 1, LOS improve- ment at one location
TURNING RADIUS ⁽²⁾ CONSTRAINTS	Two serious, three problematic.	Three problematic.	Two problematic.	Three problematic.
ESTIMATED AVERAGE WEEK ⁽³⁾ DAY PASSENGER DISPLACE- MENTS	0(0)	0(0)	263(631)	30(207)
INCREASE OVER CURRENT ⁽⁴⁾ WALKING DISTANCES	None	None	400-500 feet (2 blocks)	300-400 feet (1 block)
NUMBER OF DIRECTIONAL ⁽⁵⁾ ROUTES NOT SERVING DOWNTOWN BUS TERMINAL	4	13	6	6
VISIBILITY OF SERVICE ⁽⁶⁾ (Numeric Ranking)	1	2	4	3
QUALITY OF STOPS ⁽⁷⁾ (Numeric Ranking)	1	1	4	3
DIRECTIONAL NORTHERN ⁽⁸⁾ SERVICE	Two-way routes on two-way streets.	Two-way routes on two-way streets.	Two-way routes on two-way streets.	One-way routes on two-way streets.
CORE LOOP BUS STOPS: NUMBER OF STOPS/ AVERAGE NUMBER OF ROUTES PER STOP ⁽⁹⁾	7/13.0	7/10.3	7/11.9	1/11.3
NON-CORE LOOP BUS STOPS: NUMBER OF STOPS/AVERAGE NUMBER OF ROUTES PER STOP ⁽¹⁰⁾	10/5.2	13/4.8	17/3.2	15/3.3

- (1) Comparison of relative impacts of the test plan routings upon existing volume/capacity ratios at eleven critical central area intersections (total of 40 approaches).
- (2) A serious constraint in the ability of a bus to turn a corner renders the proposed routing pattern questionable. Problematic constraints present manageable difficulties during turning maneuvers, and can be minimized through traffic management techniques.
- (3) Main Street corridor north of Fairfield Avenue. Initial number excludes stop at intersection of Main Street and Fairfield Avenue. Second number in parentheses includes stop at intersection of Main Street and Fairfield Avenue.
- (4) Main Street corridor north of Fairfield Avenue.
- (5) Out of 28 total directional routes. Note: A through base route contains two directional routes—one in each direction of travel.
- (6) Ability of a routing plan to generate public awareness of the presence of service and to traverse areas of economic as well as social activity. Ranking of 1 connotes "best" condition.
- (7) Composite measure of bus stop location safety, comfort and aesthetics. Ranking of 1 connotes "best" condition.
- (8) Service within segment of CBD north of Fairfield Avenue.
- (9) Core loop along Fairfield Avenue, Broad Street, State Street and Middle Street.
- (10) Within CBD excluding core loop.

Chapter V

Fairfield Center

A. National Applicability

Fairfield Center is the historic center of the Town of Fairfield. It is a relatively large geographical area composed of retail stores, professional/business offices, town government buildings and a few industrial facilities, which are mixed with residential buildings. While the town of Fairfield is a very prosperous community, the town center as a whole, does not leave one with an impression of great vitality. In fact, most people would not immediately recognize the area as being a "Center." Taken as a whole, the buildings in the center are mixed architectural style giving no uniform impression. Land uses are splintered, and the small private parking lots found in a variety of places combined with the overall street pattern and traffic on the Post Road draws a great deal of attention to the automobile.

A more careful look at the Fairfield Town Center reveals considerable strengths in the form of a number of successful businesses, such as: The Fairfield Store (a department store almost 60,000 square feet); movie theaters; several excellent restaurants; and a variety of other stores all of which have a wide range of market appeal. Just off the Post Road on the side streets is the Town's Public Library and Police Station. A short distance further to the South, one can find the Town Hall.

In 1979, the future development of Fairfield Center presented an interesting opportunity for the Transit District. A commuter railroad station is located there, and the use of this facility had been growing slowly but steadily over the previous 5 or 10 years, to an average daily ridership of 3,073 in 1982. The commuter market potential drawn by this station represented to the District an important aspect of its plans to develop new and expanded transit services in Fairfield.

From almost any point of view, the District's community and economic development efforts in Fairfield were unsuccessful. Although the potential for creating a classic joint development project was greater here than anywhere else in the region, little progress was actually made. The explanation for this clearly lies in the fact that the District did not (or was unable to) commit adequate time and resources to the upfront organizational, planning, and other activities that are the necessary preconditions for successful joint development. The case fully illustrates how potential real estate projects will go nowhere without proper groundwork, particularly in community

organization and in public policy clarification.

B. Development of Fairfield Mini-Mover Services

The Transit District's service development planning effort for Fairfield consisted of two aspects:

- * Evaluating and improving limited fixed route services in the area.
- * Evaluating the potential for para-transit service alternatives for the area.

This planning effort which involved considerable negotiations with the Transportation Committee of the Representative Town Meeting, produced a two-phased service development program.

1. Creation of a mini-bus service (Mini-Mover), for the town that would be oriented toward:
 - a. Railroad commuters in the morning and afternoon peaks.
 - b. A fixed-route service oriented toward school-aged and elderly during non-peak periods and on weekends.
2. Creation of a shared-ride taxi service that would supplement and possibly even replace the mini bus services.

During 1979 and 1980, the District proceeded to develop the Mini-Mover services and operation began in February, 1981.

C. Coordination with Community and Economic Development

From the outset the community and economic development program in Fairfield was intended to be coordinated with the development of the new Fairfield services. While a number of locations within the Town could have been chosen as targets for this effort, Fairfield Center appeared to be the most interesting, because it also contained the commuter Railroad station and fixed-route bus services provided by the District as well as Cross Country Coach (which recently discontinued all services). This concentration of public transit service, along with official public policy statements favoring the "revitalization" of Fairfield Center, appeared to make the Center an excellent choice for a joint Transit District and town program.

A closer look at conditions in Fairfield Center by the District's staff revealed that it had the following attributes:

- * relatively strong market conditions;
- * difficult parking problems;
- * land assemblage difficulties, and;
- * traffic and pedestrian circulation problems.

From the point of view of the District planning staff, this situation contrasted sharply with the problems associated with its work in Downtown Bridgeport and in Bridgeport's East Side. Fairfield had none of Bridgeport's image problems, and market conditions as a whole, were relatively strong. While Fairfield Center itself could hardly be called a boom town, (it showed evidence of deterioration), the District staff believed that creating development activity in the Center would not involve reversing underlying market conditions to attract investment, but more one of reducing or modifying regulatory and institutional barriers.

Thus, several times in 1979 the District staff approached Town officials, particularly the Town Planning and Zoning staff, with proposals to begin a joint community and economic development effort. Interestingly, these approaches were politely received but led nowhere. The exact cause for this has never been ascertained, but it cannot be explained by a lack of interest in the town center's development future. The town had in fact given considerable attention to the Center area. Excellent mapping, land use data base, and other information collection had been produced with considerable care. In addition, the Town had, after considerable negotiations, obtained funding (through the Tri-State Regional Planning Agency/UMTA section 9/8 planning grant program) for a detailed parking and traffic analysis for the Center area. A joint town/Transit District planning effort was finally forced by the need to obtain funding to accomplish additional studies contemplated for the area.

The Town's slowness to respond to the District's proposals to prepare plans for Fairfield Town Center could be explained, at least in part, by the inability to picture an appropriate development role for the District, and/or by the Town's strong turf consciousness. Other factors which may have played a role in this reticence are: a general anti-Bridgeport sentiment in Fairfield (the Transit District is clearly identified as an institution whose politics were heavily dominated by Bridgeport); opposition to the MiniMover or other like services on the part of the Director of the Planning and Zoning Department; and finally, a belief that the District listened too much to the Transportation Committee of the Representative Town Meeting, which had been in a continuing battle with the town Parking Authority (staffed and directed by the Planning and Zoning Department Director) over jurisdiction and control of Town Center (Railroad Station) parking policies.

In 1980 the Town's Economic Development Commission had sought funding for an economic analysis of the area. However, this request had been rejected by the Town's Board of Finance. Several months after the rejection of town funding the Director of the Town Planning and Zoning Department approached the District requesting that \$30,000 of its Community and Economic and Development Planning and Demonstration grant funding be allocated to Fairfield Center. As will be seen from the discussion below, what happened in Fairfield was far different from what had occurred in Bridgeport.

D. Organizational Approach

The District worked through the Fairfield Economic Development Commission during all phases of the work, from preparation of work program objectives, consultant selection, and report review. This Commission was small and consisted of people selected by the Town's First Selectman. From the outset, District Staff felt that representation on the Commission for the purposes of its work should be expanded to include representatives from some of the major stores, property owners, the Planning and Zoning Board, the Parking Authority and relevant Town Committees. Discussion with the Economic Development Commission Chairman on this issue led nowhere. The Chairman felt they could handle the "communication problem" with these people when and if the need arose, and the Town Planning and Zoning Staff clearly believed that we were treading on turf that we had no business getting into.

It was the District's belief that real commitment to the project would only come from a broader group participation from the outset. More importantly, the District staff believed there was no clear understanding on objectives for the area and that troublesome as a participatory process might be, it was the only viable way to help clarify what could be accomplished in the Town Center. A potential for confronting the Town on this issue existed, but there clearly was no support for such confrontation on the part of the Transit District's Board of Directors. The District in developing the MiniMover system already had its hands full with dealing with local political and policy differences on the transit services development. It did not want to risk "upsetting the apple cart" in an area where it had less of a "legitimate" role to play.

Whether broader participation and an effort to include and/or organize Fairfield Center merchants, property owners, and other interests would have made a difference, is hard to tell. But, from the outset it ran against the overall philosophy of the approach to the Community and Economic Development adopted by

the District's Community and Economic Development staff, where the District is one interested party which could and should work through organizations created for the purposes of promoting common interests. The Fairfield Economic Development Commission had been established for such a purpose, however, it was not, from the point of view of the District Staff, broadly enough based to create the desired objective.

E. Planning

The Transit District's planning role in Fairfield Town Center was limited to relatively few activities. The District funded "A Development Study of Fairfield Center," a report prepared by the Boston Office of Economic Research Associates. In addition, the District assisted in the preparation of cost estimates and redesigns for some modest improvements to the parking and bus waiting areas at the Railroad Station, and finally the District worked in assisting in preparation of plans which led to the submission of a State Urban Development Action Grant.

1. Development Study

a. Study Approach

The preliminary negotiations with Fairfield Staff on the exact scope of a study for Fairfield Center determined the eventual outcome. The Town Planning and Zoning and Economic Development Commission Staff had prepared a work program for an economic base study. The District Staff was skeptical that an unfocused economic analysis of the area would help very much. It believed that the need in the Center area was for the preparation of an urban design and physical development alternatives concept which would be followed by more focused analysis of market conditions. The District saw the problems of Fairfield Center as being those of the political acceptance of office retail development of a relatively large scale (some Town residents feared so-called "over-commercialization" or "Manhattanization"). The question, therefore, was what did the Town think it wanted there, and what obstacles existed toward achieving such a goal. Discussions with Town staff and District Board members revealed little support for such an approach to the study. The result was therefore a work program heavily emphasizing economic research. A small element of the work program contained urban design/planning work tasks.

b. Study Results

The Fairfield Center Development Report prepared by the firm of Economic Research Associates (Boston) came forth with the

following findings:

- * The Town Center could easily absorb an estimated 300,000 square feet of new office space between 1980 and 1990.
- * Demand for 130,000 sq. ft. of retail space also existed if current population and other growth trends in the town and region continue.
- * A general consensus existed that the Town Center is "unattractive and underutilized." Retail selection is viewed as being limited and a need for more restaurants and shops which could attract shoppers to the Center.
- * Obstacles to development included high interest rates (still high in 1981-82) but also included:
 - (1) a shortage of parking;
 - (2) splintered ownership of land;
 - (3) high land prices making assemblage difficult;
 - (4) some local opposition to development which clouded the future of any proposal for new development;
 - (5) restrictive zoning policies such as parking regulation that resulted in ground floor space being used for parking for the office spaces above.

The report proposed a clear set of alternative actions for the Town to pursue, focusing particularly on the blocks immediately around the Railroad Station.

Do Nothing - No important new development would occur. There may be some marginal improvements made to some properties, and what new development that would occur would most certainly see continued use of valuable ground floor area allocated to parking. This scenario precluded any peak opportunity for transit joint development.

Develop to Meet Market Demand: Development of the the area immediately around the railroad station to a

higher density that would meet current market demand. This scenario could require some town participation in land assemblage, and a rewriting of zoning regulations for the area, and possibly some coordinated actions on parking facilities. This alternative would present the greatest potential for privately financed transit joint development resulting in substantial improvements of all public transit facilities in this area, particularly the railroad station.

Develop Under Present Zoning: Careful analysis of several options was conducted under this alternative. To accomplish this, the Town would need to: (1) bring together several property owners to work together, (2) develop a clear urban design concept for the area, (3) develop a solution for parking and (4) obtain funding to pay for sidewalk, streetscape, traffic and building facade improvement.

Planned Unit Development: The town would rewrite zoning for the area that contains incentives to assemble properties and present plans that met specific predetermined design and use guidelines.

In addition to these four basic approaches to the Center, the report recommended that the town create a position for and hire a Director of Economic Development who would among other activities, coordinate all efforts relating to Fairfield Center developments. Also incorporated within these alternative approaches were a series of proposals for the Town to proceed with streetscape, sidewalk, building facade and other modest physical improvement programs that would address some of the problems associated with the relatively poor appearance of the area and the inadequate pedestrian environment.

2. State Urban Development Action Grant

The Community and Economic Development Staff at the District also assisted the Town of Fairfield in preparing a State of Connecticut Urban Development Action Grant application for the Center area. The application sought funding for a Transit Pedestrian Mall along Sanford Street, connecting the Sherman Green with the Railroad Station. It also requested money for the purchase of small properties, particularly along Sanford Street, which if assembled could permit a more comprehensive development of the area. While the plan received a preliminary commitment for funding from the State, it lacked needed private sector backing in order to proceed.

F. Program Support and Implementation

The Urban Action grant proposal for the area never got off the ground partly because it had no private sector backing. In the view of the District, the grant application put the "cart before the horse." It also appeared to be a relatively expensive public action (more than \$1.5 million) much of which could be financed through incentive zoning and other development techniques.

Reaction to the "Development Study of Fairfield Center" prepared by Economic Research Associates was also mixed. A preliminary review meeting held in the First Selectman's office with the Chairman of the Planning and Zoning Board produced a strong negative reaction to the idea of re-zoning the Center area. Similarly, discussions with several Center business leaders produced negative comments about the overall value of the report.

While it may appear self-serving, the District Staff believe that the kinds of initial negative reaction which this report produced has more to do with the process through which the study was prepared and presented. If a broader based organization or committee had been created at the outset, where key players in the area were brought into the study process so they could better understand its genesis, then there would have been a greater likelihood that more concrete support would have resulted. The Staff could probably have worked harder on creating such a process, but this was not likely to succeed without substantial support from the District's Board of Directors and/or other people within the town of Fairfield.

A second cause for the generally poor reaction to the report, was that although it suggests alternate development scenarios, these alternatives were accompanied by little if any real visual material, and the basic urban design and physical planning issues were not worked out beyond some rudimentary proposals.

By the fall of 1982 the District undertook a re-evaluation of the approach to Center Development. A strategy of approaching a wider segment of the business and residential communities was considered a more easily understood presentation of development issues and alternatives was in preparation. However, by the fall of 1982 this effort was dropped because the District's MiniMover services were in grave trouble. The result was a termination first of MiniMover commuter services, in early 1983, and finally in early 1984 a decision to cut all the MiniMover services was made by both Town and District officials. While the Railroad Station still presents a great opportunity for classic transit/joint development project, the reduction and eventual elimination of MiniMover services weakened the

justification for Transit District involvement.

The Town did proceed to create and fund the Economic Development Coordinator position, and has actively sought funding for the streetscape improvements proposed in the "Development Study."

Chapter VI

East Side/East Main Street

A. National Applicability

The East Side of Bridgeport is a classic example of an urban "melting pot" neighborhood which in recent years has seen rapid decline, disinvestment, and deterioration. The history of this neighborhood is clearly reflected in the fortunes of the local transit services, where declines in ridership closely parallel the economic decline of the East Side.

The Greater Bridgeport Transit District selected the East Side for an ambitious demonstration program that would introduce new "paratransit" services into the neighborhood that would be designed to meet specific inner city ridership needs. Recognizing that the impact and success of the proposed new services would be greatly improved by the success of efforts to rebuild the rest of the neighborhood, the District decided to become actively involved in the overall revitalization process, focusing special attention on the East Side's commercial corridor - East Main Street.

As a participant in this commercial revitalization process, the District played an active role in the creation of a new merchant association, and then provided planning and staff support for:

- * sidewalk sales and other business promotions;
- * grant applications for sidewalk improvements, a facade improvement program, housing subsidy programs, and merchant association operating budgets;
- * development packaging and finance.

Transit agencies with substantial services in inner city neighborhoods may find the following very instructive as to the types of roles that conceivably be played.

B. Introduction

1. Area Description. The East Side is one of Bridgeport's historic neighborhoods. It was settled as early as colonial times, but the majority of the area was built in the mid 19th century by P.T. Barnum and William H. Noble as a planned community built around Wheeler and Wilson Sewing Machine (later Singer Sewing Machine) manufacturing facilities. The East side subsequently became a "staging" area for immigrants that settled

in Bridgeport to work in the area's growing industrial economy--settled first by Jewish, then Italian, Eastern Europeans, and now Blacks and Hispanics.

Much of the housing in the area is Victorian wood-frame construction with a variety of styles ranging from spacious single family "mansions" (built for the plant managers and owners) and four and six family tenements built for plant workers. East Main Street runs through the heart of this area and contains a wide variety of commercial buildings many of which are historically significant.

The lower portion of the East Side (below the Railroad tracks) is in the greatest state of disrepair. Much of the older housing has been demolished to make way for the Roberto Clemente redevelopment project. One of Bridgeport's largest public housing projects, Father Panik Village, is also located there. North of the railroad tracks conditions improve considerably. An excellent Neighborhood Housing service is at work in this area. The City and the Bridgeport Economic Development Corporation recently completed an industrial park on the northern fringe of the area, and East Main Street commercial activity appears stronger.

2. Reason for Transit District Involvement. The Bridgeport area had been selected by the Urban Mass Transportation Administration (UMTA) as a location for developing an inner city Service and Methods Demonstration project, where the Federal Government sought to apply much of its para-transit service development concepts, (which had been developed most successfully in suburban communities) in inner city settings. The East Side/East End neighborhoods had been selected for this service development demonstration work with a budget in excess of \$750,000. As a result, with a service development commitment of such a large magnitude, the District believed that its Community and Economic Development program staff should explore potential roles it could play in protecting and enhancing the planned investment in paratransit services.

3. Summary of Project Activities. The Community and Economic Development involvement on the East Side began with the District's commitment of \$9,000 for a planning study which it used to obtain a city match of \$9,000 of Community Development Block Grant funds. A planning advisory committee was formed to select a project consultant. This committee consisted almost entirely of merchants.

Once a consultant was selected (summer, 1979) and contracts executed, the District, on the Consultant's advice set out to strengthen the Committee particularly to bring in greater hispanic merchant and residential representation. This

Committee became known as the "East Main Street Commercial Revitalization Committee." A group planning process was begun in late 1979, and a report was issued by early summer 1980. About this time project staff began working with the City for a State of Connecticut Urban Development Action Grant application for a development that included housing, street pedestrianization, and bus stop improvements. This proposal was submitted in late 1980.

On East Main Street, the District began working with the City of Bridgeport and the East Side Neighborhood Housing Services on a three pronged approach, the street's revitalization. In the following two years, early 1981 to early 1983, the District assisted in:

1. Obtaining assistance from the Neighborhood Reinvestment Corporation (NRC), designating the East Main Street Commercial Revitalization project as a national demonstration in Neighborhood Commercial Revitalization. The obvious benefit of NRC involvement is that they provided badly needed seed money for starting up a permanently staffed organization. However, there were greater impacts that cannot be tangibly measured, i.e. national recognition as a demonstration project, and access to the NRC national staff, which has many years of national experience in neighborhood revitalization.
2. Preparing cost estimates for and impact analysis for two Capital grant applications for street and sidewalk Capital improvements which eventually led to a commitment of about \$250,000 for bus stop improvements by the Urban Mass Transportation Administration.
3. Preparing grant applications to the City for Community Development Block Grant support for facade improvement programs.
4. Fund raising and organizational support for sidewalk sales and other street events.
5. Preparing applications for the HUD section 8 moderate income rehabilitation housing program which several merchants used for the residential portions of their buildings.
6. Preparing a variety of planning studies, including the preparation of an economic base study produced by Carol Bluestone, Associates in Washington, D.C.

7. Assisting on the creation of development finance proposals for three major projects.

8. Assisting the City and the Bridgeport Economic Development Corporation in gaining a Connecticut Enterprise zone designation for the northern end of the street.

During the early phases of the East Main Street Project, the Transit District concentrated on organizational activities and on raising \$5 million in public funding needed for street, sidewalk, bus stop and other pedestrian related improvements. Considerable progress was made on the organizational end, especially after the Neighborhood Reinvestment Corporation took the East Main Street Project under its wing. However, the changes in Federal policies brought on by the Reagan administration all but ended the prospects for financing major street and sidewalk improvements (except for approximately \$250,000 funded finally by UMTA.)

While the cutback in Federal aid was seen as a major setback at the time, it was in fact fortunate. It would have addressed a cosmetic problem, before the merchants, property owners, and the Association were actually fully committed to making reinvestments in their properties and businesses on the street.

East Main Street needed organizational strength and it needed public/private financing instruments that would lead to business improvements. Once the prospects for public funding for the public works improvements diminished, the District and the NRC concentrated on financing the private development and business projects, organizing group marketing and promotion projects, and other support activities.

C. Organization

In 1978 and early 1979, after a closer look at the East Side Neighborhood, the District determined that the area had a successful Neighborhood Housing Service with relatively broad residential representation. This program, while constantly in need of funding, was very successful and had attracted considerable national attention. Similarly, the Bridgeport Economic Development Corporation was working with major employers in the area and had, with City assistance, successfully developed the Boston Avenue Industrial Park, an Inner City Industrial Development. Within this area there remained East Main Street, the neighborhood's historic commercial center. After discussions with the City, the Bridgeport Economic Development Corporation (BEDCO), and the

East Side Neighborhood Housing Services, (NHS) the District decided to undertake a project on East Main Street.

The District's Board of Directors would not proceed with the project, however, without a financial commitment from at least one other interested party. Most agencies and private groups essentially supported the idea of revitalizing East Main Street in concept, but said "Good luck, but we can't help you now. We have enough problems of our own." The exception was the City Planning Department. The project got under way when the City planning director agreed to fund an evaluation of the street, matching the District's commitment of \$9,000 which would be used to hire a consultant with experience in the area of Neighborhood Commercial development.

1. Creation of East Main Street Commercial Revitalization Committee. The District planning staff was determined that whatever could be done there, it had to be done with true merchant participation. A consultant selection committee was organized, and interestingly, the merchants preferred the proposal and verbal presentation of the team which only got moderate support from the professional planners evaluation. The decision was made to select the consultant team favored by the merchants -- J.T. Williams, Associates of Providence, Rhode Island.

The Consultant's first week of work resulted in a short report indicating that he believed the street had real economic potential and that a merchant/community based planning process ought to be begun. Considerable care was given to creating a committee composed of equal numbers of merchants from the north end of the street (where the bigger stronger stores and banks are found -- e.g. Skydel's and Arctic Sports Shop; in fact, the northern end of the street between Barnum and Ogden Street was relatively vital), and the southern end of the street, (where the Spanish merchants predominated). Organizing the hispanic merchants was particularly difficult in that they had never worked well with the existing merchant association, "The East Side Merchants Association," which was by 1979, a northern organization. Equally difficult was the task of finding leadership in the hispanic residential community. By the Fall of 1979, however, a Planning Committee was formed and this Committee purposely chose to meet in the basement of Luis's Furniture Store, one of the leading businesses in the south end of the Street.

This Committee met at least eight times within the next ten months to develop a detailed street plan and to discuss revitalization strategies. During this time District Staff essentially became the Committee Staff, performing whatever was necessary to organize meetings, communicate with Committee Members, and prepare reports and mailings. The result of this

was the report prepared by J.T. Williams Associates and District Staff.

2. Creation of the East Main Street Commercial Revitalization Association. A major recommendation of the Williams report was that the merchants should form their own organization dedicated specifically to the purposes of rebuilding East Main Street. This organization should be permanently staffed and should attempt to manage the Street, much as Mall Managements do for suburban shopping centers. At a minimum, this Association should run promotions, organize security patrols and other activities for the Street. In addition, it would undertake development packaging, business financing and, if necessary, become a developer of major projects.

While the merchants had seen some progress by the summer of 1980, they were hardly convinced that such an organization would really help. The District and its Consultant on the project, J. T. Williams, determined that seed money for the operation of this organization was required to demonstrate its usefulness and to become a catalyst for future work. To this end, the District approached a number of area foundations and came away empty handed.

Help did eventually come from the Neighborhood Housing Services and its national umbrella organization, the Neighborhood Reinvestment Corporation. In 1979, when the District's Community and Economic Development staff first began to work on the East Side, it had met with the Director of Bridgeport Neighborhood Housing Services. While the director was supportive, he said that his Board would not be able to allocate staff time to the project, and that the Neighborhood Reinvestment Corp. Staff, (NRC), working on commercial projects, had determined that there would be little or no opportunity for commercial revitalization success on East Main Street.

By the summer of 1980, however, the NRC had appointed a new Director of commercial projects, and that program was being reoriented. The NHS Director arranged for a meeting in Bridgeport between the new NRC Commercial Director, the District Staff and James T. Williams. At that meeting, the NRC Director described NRC'S interest in picking several demonstrations around the country that were in strong Neighborhood Housing Services areas and that had a good potential for success. Upon hearing about the East Main Street project, the NRC Director indicated that our program appeared as good as anyone's and that we ought to submit a proposal to NRC and to get the City's financial community to back it.

From July through December, 1980, the Transit District and the NHS organized an intensive lobbying effort by Bridgeport

business, especially in the financial community, the East Main Street Merchants, and the State and City Government. This effort was coordinated with the Staff of Congressman McKinney's office. As a result, the NRC designated East Main Street as a demonstration in Neighborhood Commercial revitalization. This commitment meant that NRC would provide Staff for organizational purposes as well as a direct cash contribution of at least \$30,000 to help run the organization during its first year of operation.

The major requirement placed on the project by the NRC was that a carefully laid out community organization process would have to be followed before financing and staffing would be made available. To the District and many merchants, this appeared to mean that a lot of steps would have to be repeated, but that this was a small price to pay for getting the financial support, as well as the national recognition which NRC would bring the project.

During 1981 the District continued to lend the NRC local support with every step of its organizing process -- from setting up appropriate meetings, to assisting in sidewalk sale organizations and helping to outline the structure of the organization, prepare a proposed budget and solicit local support. This work culminated in a meeting in Greenwich, Connecticut attended by representatives from Bridgeport's banks, a broad spectrum of merchants, and a somewhat less sizeable but nonetheless significant number of area residents. Soon after this meeting, the East Main Street Commercial Revitalization Association was incorporated as part of a reconstituted Neighborhood Commercial and Housing Service. (This union between the Housing programs was relatively unique and would not have been possible if the Commercial and Housing programs were not given considerable autonomy.)

The District's role in the community organization process (lasting almost three years) changed considerably. It began in 1979 as the Community Organizer and the only staff available to the East Main Street community. By 1982, the District had taken on a role as Board member actively participating in the ongoing policy making activities of a full-fledged Association, which from the point of view of the District staff is exactly where it wanted to be.

D. Planning

Planning work performed by the District or funded through its grants covered a wide range of studies and reports. Each activity is briefly summarized here.

1. The J.T. Williams report: East Main Street. This report, funded jointly by the District and the City of Bridgeport (with additional funding coming from the State Office of Management and Budget), established the basic framework for everything that the District and others set out to accomplish between 1980 and 1983. It recommended a three part approach:

- a. The creation of a viable staffed Association that would coordinate efforts to rebuild the Street.
- b. The funding of a comprehensive Capital Improvements Program for the Street.
- c. Financing Private development - facade improvement programs for some projects; major investments for at least five large pilot projects.

2. Caroline Street. The District's Community and Economic Development Staff participated as part of a team that submitted proposals for funding from the State of Connecticut Urban Development Action Grant program. Working closely with the Bridgeport Neighborhood Housing Services, a plan was prepared for the complete revitalization of a one block section of Caroline Street on the East Side. The buildings on this block were in an advanced state of deterioration and a substantial amount of property had fallen into City hands through tax default. Using these assembled properties, the plan called for the rehabilitation of existing buildings (about four) for residential use. Construction of new housing in several lots between existing structures, completely rebuilding Caroline Street to emphasize pedestrian use with innovative on street parking, sidewalks and pedestrian amenities (similar to European residential neighborhood street designs) and finally facilities for bus stops and potential paratransit service innovations. Public funding was to be used for the street and sidewalk improvements, land acquisitions and write downs, and the construction of building foundations. This public investment would be used to leverage private financing for the completed residential buildings.

The proposal appeared to have strong support from several State Agencies, but for some reason, in spite of strong support from the City's Office of Development Administration, the project was given a low priority ranking by the Mayor's Office. In the end, the City obtained no Urban Act funding for any of its priority projects, but it is not clear if the Caroline Street proposal would have fared any better. As the State proceeded to implement this experimental Urban Action Grant program, many interesting projects fell by the wayside because they did not meet the basic legislative intent of the program.

3. Capital Improvements. The development of a capital improvements plan went through three phases:

a. Concept Design and Cost Estimates - prepared by J.T. Williams and Albert Veri Associates Architects. Here an overall plan for Capital improvements was developed for the sidewalks, crosswalks and other public spaces along the street from Stratford Avenue to Ogden Street.

b. Plan Revision and Impact Analysis: This was prepared jointly by the Transit District Staff, and the City's Office of Development Administration. The results of this work were incorporated into a grant application submitted to three Federal Agencies. The Urban Mass Transportation Administration, the Economic Development Administration and Highway Administration.

c. Transit Stop Sidewalk and Shelter Improvements Plan: When it became apparent that no Federal funding existed for Capital improvements of the magnitude originally contemplated, the District then proceeded to make plans for bus stop improvements. This entailed identifying several key stop locations, preparing possible improvement plans for each and developing cost estimates for each. A portion of this work was incorporated within the grant application submitted to UMTA in 1981 for Downtown and East Side Capital improvements.

4. Other Planning Activities. The District also prepared a detailed property ownership, existing land use, and development concept plan for the street. While performing this work the District also assisted the Neighborhood Reinvestment Corporations Economic Consultant in their data collection phases of their work.

E. Support Activities

In the initial phases of the East Main Street project the District's Community and Economic Development Staff essentially carried most of the community organization responsibilities, including everything from arranging meetings, preparing and distributing meeting notes, identifying and contacting potential supporters or participants. In addition to this, the District played a variety of roles in organizing several marketing and promotion events for East Main Street between 1980 and 1983. Without going into great detail, a list of the activities

performed would include the following: The District coordinated all sidewalk entertainment events for a sidewalk sale held in July, 1980. It performed some of the same tasks in 1981, working closely with NRC staff, except the sidewalk sale concept contained considerably less entertainment and fanfare. Again in January of 1982, the District assisted in the organization and promotion of "Three Kings Day" (one of the most important Christmas holiday events for the Hispanic Community), which was celebrated on the lower end of the street. In 1983, the District played less of an organizational role in the summer sidewalk sale and more of a merchant role in that it contributed funds to the overall advertising budget for the event, and prepared a small advertising booth to make community residents more aware of some of its bus pass, Value Fare, and other marketing programs.

F. Project Implementation

In addition to seeking and successfully obtaining public funds for capital improvements, the District also worked to obtain the financing to implement private sector development projects along the street. In 1980, a brief application for HUD Section 8 moderate income rehab units was prepared for several mixed use buildings along the street. The Section 8 housing subsidies had the benefit of quarantining project income, but also placed strict limits on the use of the units. This application was approved by the Bridgeport Housing Authority and with NRC assistance, the District worked with two different merchants to prepare appropriate project applications and cost estimates.

The District also prepared a detailed analysis of the financial implications of an historic district designation for East Main Street. Exhibit VI-1 shows the before and after tax implications of doing the Hernandez Building on East Main Street. This building, one of the most historically significant on the street is also one of the most deteriorated. As the analysis shows the Federally generated tax credits could amount to \$82,500 (sheltering that amount of income assuming a 50% tax bracket) which could go a long way toward raising the desired equity capital needed for this project. This analysis finally set in motion an application for National Historic District designation for Lower East Main Street, and it also stimulated at least two property owners to pursue the financing of substantial development projects with the understanding that a historic district designation would eventually be approved.

Another key factor in project financing would be the cost of money. The interest rate shown in the Hernandez Building project analysis in Exhibit VI-1 shows an average of 7.5% for 20 years. This figure is considerably below the market rates

existing in 1981 and 1982. With help from the NRC two approaches to finding this funding were initiated. First negotiations with the State of Connecticut Department of Housing were begun on the availability of funding for other moderate and low income families. This program provided funding at 7.5%. The chief obstacle to using such financing was the mixed use nature of most of the East Main Street projects -- the commercial portion of the projects had to be financed elsewhere. This limitation along with other regulations led the East Main Street Commercial Revitalization Association to look for alternative sources -- particularly the Local Initiatives Support Corporation, (LISC), which provided low interest financing for community based projects. By the middle of 1982, this effort was also stalled because of the resistance from Bridgeport's financial community to provide local matching moneys for the funds provided by LISC.

Exhibit VI-1
Hernandez Building
Evaluation of Historic Tax
Credit Impact

LAND ACQUISITION	\$7,000
Building	40,000
Legal Costs	1,500
	<u>\$48,500</u>

Construction Costs Including Const. Interest Arch. fees other closing etc.	351,500
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Construction Costs Available for ITC
\$330,000

Total Project Cost 400,000

Tax credit	\$82,500
Depreciable base	351,500

Total Project minus Land and 1/2 tax credit

Financing Partnership Contributions	\$100,000
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Long Termed Financing	300,000	7 1/2% for 20 yrs.
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Space:

4	Commercial spaces @ 500/month each
7	2 Bedroom Apts. @ 275/month "
1	3 Bedroom Apts. @ 325/month "

Exhibit VI-1
(cont.)

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Residential	27,000				
Commercial	<u>24,000</u>				
Total Revenues	\$51,000	\$53,550	\$56,225	\$59,035	\$61,985
<u>Expenses</u>					
Vacancy 5%	2,300	2,700	3,800	2,950	3,100
Maintenance 7%	3,500	3,750	3,950	4,150	4,350
Management 7%	3,500	3,750	3,950	4,150	4,350
Utilities	1,500	1,600	1,800	2,000	2,200
Taxes	3,800	3,800	5,000	7,500	10,000
Insurance	<u>2,000</u>	<u>2,200</u>	<u>2,400</u>	<u>2,600</u>	<u>2,800</u>
Interest	<u>22,272</u>	<u>21,749</u>	<u>21,186</u>	<u>20,580</u>	<u>19,926</u>
Subtotal	<u>38,872</u>	39,540	41,086	43,930	46,726
Depreciation	<u>23,433</u>	<u>23,433</u>	<u>23,434</u>	<u>23,433</u>	<u>23,433</u>
Total Expense	62,305	62,973	64,520	67,363	70,156
Income (loss)	(11,305)	(9,423)	(8,295)	(8,328)	(8,174)
<u>Cash Flow</u>					
Tax Credit	82,500				
Building Costs	400,000				
Loan	300,000				
Partner Cont	100,000				
Taxable Income/Loss	11,305	-9,423	-8,295	-8,328	-8,174
Depreciation	23,433	23,433	23,433	23,433	23,433
Principal Amount	-6,730	-7,252	-7,186	-8,422	-9,076
Tax Inc/Loss	<u>5,653</u>	<u>4,712</u>	<u>4,147</u>	<u>4,164</u>	<u>4,087</u>
After tax Income	\$93,551	\$11,470	\$12,099	\$10,847	\$10,270

APPENDIX A

PROGRAM
NARRATIVE FOR A
PROPOSAL FOR CREATING
A COORDINATED TRANSIT/BUSINESS
DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM
FOR THE
GREATER BRIDGEPORT REGION

1. INTRODUCTION

We are proposing to obtain funding to assist the GBTD, GBRPA and BEDCO to perform work which would have three separate but inter-related objectives:

1. promotion of a business activity (emphasis on industrial) that could provide several hundred jobs for chronically unemployed minority poor in the region.
2. Preparation of an analysis of manufacturer's list for the region which would include lists of names, addresses and kinds of products. This list would be used for several purposes:
 - a) in contacting businesses in the region on their intentions to expand and contract or move;
 - b) provide a more effective means of identifying potential job openings, especially long-range for job training programs and;
 - c) preparation of product or manufacturing capabilities of the region which could be used to market the area more effectively.
3. The development of ride-sharing program, beginning first with employers of one-hundred or more employees, but gradually attempting to reach employers of twenty-five or perhaps even ten or more persons.

To achieve the above objectives we have developed the following program. It should be noted that the first tasks are relevant to the achievement of all three of the objectives identified above. The final work tasks, however, are directly focused on the achievement of the three main objectives.

1.0 TASK: Preparation of Regional Manufacturers and Commercial Business List

(Labor force employment, economic activity, transportation/utilities, communications, economic activity, sources of information)

1.1 OBJECTIVES:

The first task would be the preparation of a regional list of businesses using all available resources. Staff working on this will do no original research but would collect information on names of businesses, addresses,

names of contacts, types of products, gross sales, if possible; number of employees, type of skills required. Again, none of this research would be original, but would rely on primary sources of information already available in the region but not centrally located or computerized.

1.2 SUB-TASKS:

- A. Identify and contact information sources including telephone companies, State DOL, local CETA, local job training programs (ITE), Chamber of Commerce, and the Manufacturers Associations in the area.
- B. Using best information sources, prepare initial Economic Activities Information Guide with available information, leaving blank information gaps. Establish a format that would facilitate computerized data handling. Test computer processing.
- C. Identify geographic clusters of employers.
- D. Analyze information for grouping of activities of products (e.g., machine tool manufacturers).

1.3 STAFF & BUDGET:

Estimate five man-months plus computer time and keypunching time, etc. Collection of data plus analysis total budget might involve 25 to 50,000 dollars.

2.2 TASK:

Identify Industrial Retention and New Industrial Development Sectors.

2.1 OBJECTIVES:

The activity here would be to identify economic activities already strong in the area which could and should be retained, and to highlight potential areas of growth. Work here would be

done in cooperation with local banks, Chamber of Commerce, business associations and might also include contacting local investment organizations to determine what areas of the economy they believe are the strongest and with the greatest economic development over the long-run.

2.2 SUB-TASKS

- A. Identify industrial sectors which could be retained without regard to land, labor, and energy cost problems in the area. Also, activities which could locate here or must locate here because of special benefits, i.e., labor availability, proximity to their particular markets, transportation considerations.
- B. Prepare lists of economic indicators for the region, such as gross regional and city products, etc., etc.; in other words, a type of gross regional product and other data which parallels those figures used on a national level to indicate the strength of the national economy.
- C. Analyze national economic trends and business trends to identify those areas most likely to see the greatest expansion and growth. For example, at the risk of using a cliché, it may be found that seaweed production has the greatest long-range potential for farm animal feed and the University of Bridgeport is doing excellent research in this area. This sector or groups of activities associated with seaweed production could then be a business activity that would be aggressively promoted for the region.

2.3 MANPOWER AND BUDGET:

Estimate two-man months, 5 to 7,000 dollars. This task would require development of a public/private economic development team, including representatives of banks and other institutions in the area.

3.0 TASK: PREPARE A LIST OF GOODIES

Describe in detail the available and needed economic tools and services to promote, attract and develop economically sound industry and commerce in the region and particularly in cities and towns with unemployment problems.

3.1 OBJECTIVES:

A list of all tools available for economic development of the region to be prepared. This list then could be used or adapted to promote specific target and industrial groups. Some programs may be more applicable to certain kinds of industrial activities than others.

3.2 SUB-TASKS:

- A. Identify State programs.
- B. Identify appropriate federal programs.
- C. Identify applicable local powers.
- D. Prepare summary of tools.

3.3 MANPOWER AND BUDGET:

One to two man months, 3 to 5,000 dollars. It should be noted that the person doing this work would have to have a fair amount of economic development experience and would have to have the sophistication necessary to identify the crucial aspects of given programs in terms of their applicability to economic development.

4.0 TASK:

Promote attracting the development of an industry which would provide jobs for low income, unemployed, and minority poor.

4.1 OBJECTIVES:

The project and routine would focus on the finding of one or two businesses or industries which would hire a group of low-income, low skilled, entry level persons, etc. The search would be targeted on both industrial activity which is also already strong in this area, and likely to stay that

way, or on activities having strong growth potential nationally which might locate here or could be attracted to locate here.

4.2 SUBTASKS:

- A. Identify specific target groups.
- B. Prepare goodies list of applicable to labor interests, mediums skill requirements.
- C. Mail promotional information.
- D. Follow-up on possible respondents.

It should be noted that for all practical purposes we would probably have to offer potential industries training programs, subsidized labor, free recruiting, a very attractive site, and some very beneficial grant, loan or financing terms.

5.0 TASK:

Complete manufacturers and business index filling in gaps and identify geographic areas for potential economic development.

- 5.1 This work task would really support the on-going general work being performed by BEDCO and other such economic development/job creating organizations.

5.2 SUBTASKS:

- A. Survey names on index for missing information and for the accuracy of the information.
- B. Analyze all industrial zone land to determine
 - 1) the ownership of the land, assemblage of land, the availability of that land, and price and finally, any possible constraints such as lack of utilities or other type of activity which could preclude a real development of that site as an industrial park or an industrial development site.

- C. Finalize list of possible economic incentives, development organization and transportation services available to job creating industry.

6.0 TASK: RIDE-SHARING BROKERAGE PROGRAM

See Mark Boaz work.

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